



2024 **Annual** **Report**

#SoulFoodFor MigrantYouth



Contents

1. A Word from the President	2
2. Who We Are	5
- Mission	
- Vision	
- Aims	
- soul food at a Glance	
- Child and Youth Protection Policy	
- Principles and Values	
3. Cultural Excursions & Events	11
- Breakdown of Excursions & Activities	
- Activity Highlights	
- Events - soul food service	
4. Professional Development Program	28
- Program Breakdown	
- After the Program	
5. Communication & Our Team	33
- Digital Communication	
- Team: Leadership & Volunteers	
6. Financial Resources	37
- Financial Reporting	
- Sources of Funding and Donations	
- Breakdown of Expenses	
7. Looking Toward the Future	43
- Our Mission Continues: Future Ideas & Projects	
- A Heartfelt Thank You	

A Word from the President



Kryssandra Heslop

Co-Founder, Creative Director & President



As we reflect on this past year, I am filled with pride and gratitude for all that we've achieved. We've continued to pour energy and resources into our programs, intentionally going deep instead of broad with our approach. This has led to larger projects and accomplishments, while maintaining meaningful impact.

In 2024 we traveled abroad with young Soul Food members for the first time. Our trip to Venice, Italy was full of incredible experiences and connections. We also organized our first international event there.

Back in France, we continued going on cultural excursions, organizing cultural community events and working to find equitable professional opportunities for our young members. We also organized two powerful exhibitions and participated in a third, showcasing the creativity, talent and stories of young Soul Food members. These exhibitions not only brought their voices to the forefront but also provided spaces for others to discover our mission and engage with the critical conversations we're fostering around migration and integration.

Additionally, we hosted two vibrant one-day festivals, full of music, art, food, and cultural exchanges, reminding us of the joy and power that comes from shared creative experiences. Across the three enriching trips we embarked on, we witnessed young Soul Food members discovering new places, finding inspiration and developing a deeper sense of autonomy and belonging.

At the heart of everything we do are these remarkable young people we serve. Their creativity, resilience, optimism, and determination to shape brighter futures continues to inspire us. It is their energy that pushes Soul Food forward and reminds us why this work is so vital.

2024 has been a very special year for Soul Food. We are endlessly thankful to everyone who helped make it so—our dedicated team of volunteers, our generous donors, all of the talented artists who collaborate with us, and our outstanding partners. Your support fuels our ability to dream big and make our dreams a reality.

Looking ahead, I am excited about the opportunities to come. Together, we will keep building a world where everyone, regardless of their background or immigration status, feels a sense of belonging and possibility.

With gratitude,

Kryssandra Heslop



soul food: Who We Are



At Soul Food, **we believe in the value of kindness, community and art.** We believe that everyone has the **equal right to beauty and creativity.** Everyone has the right **to be inspired.** These beliefs are at the core of our mission to expose young migrants and refugees to art and culture, in an effort to **form safe creative spaces** conducive to the type of inspiration required to sustain them as they make their way through a world that is often judgmental, cruel and unfair.

We hope that in doing so, they will learn, grow and anchor themselves to something they find inspiring, that will then allow them to bloom into their full potential. We believe that this will also allow them to integrate into their (new) local communities in a natural, productive and positive way.

Mission

Soul Food's mission is to **expose young migrants (and refugees) to cultural events and artistic environments**, such as concerts, dance performances, artists' workshops, and museums, in an effort to provide **intellectual and cultural stimulation**, foster **creativity**, facilitate **positive integration** experiences, and encourage novel levels of autonomy in their new home country. We work towards these goals with the hope that with each new cultural experience, migrant youth will not only make new friends and forget about their problems, but also feel like a part of local culture and life, instead of like someone who is watching from the outside.

Rather than attempting to force young migrants to forget their past and country of origin, we encourage them to discover different cultures, and find their own level of balance between these. We show them that **culture is not mutually exclusive.** This is done partly by embarking on cultural excursions, creating safe spaces for **open dialogue** and opportunities to meet locals and **experience art, music and food** as they do. We also work to achieve this via our professional development program and cultural community events, giving young migrants the opportunity to learn and exchange with prestigious professionals, join open-minded teams and contribute their cultural knowledge and perspectives via **creative collaborations** with chefs and artists.

Vision

Through our work, we **promote sustainable and positive integration** within immigrant communities in France. We envision a France with museums, restaurants, theatres, and concert halls full of **people from all over the world**; not only tourists, but migrants, refugees and locals too. We also envision a world where migrants and refugees have this type of **positive visibility**, and not one where we only see them sleeping in tents in crowded cities and refugee camps. We are **changing the narrative** as we actively promote **positive, authentic representations** of them.

Aims

We aim to help **provide access** to museums, theatres and other cultural spaces, as well as prestigious professional opportunities in cultural fields. By providing these types of intellectual and cultural stimulation, we also strive to fill in the excessive time gaps left by the French administration system, when migrant youth are not permitted to attend school. **We use art as a form of informal education** and aim to **encourage autonomy** through these methods.

Main Goals

1. Promote positive integration for migrant and refugee youth
2. Provide equitable opportunities to young Soul Food members
3. Change the narrative surrounding migrants and refugees

Principal Activities

1. Cultural excursions & artistic activities
2. Professional Development Program
3. Cultural community events

“For me, one important highlight for 2024 was the entire Goethe-Institut project, which arrived unexpectedly for soul food and was achieved by our team in the most brilliant and professional way. I am very proud of all the cultural workshops we were able to organize at the [Goethe] Institut and of the fantastic event, including the show that celebrated the whole process.”

- François, soul food co-founder

Young Members at a Glance

- 1.** Young migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied minors, aged 14-22
- 2.** The majority are from French-speaking West Africa, namely Mali, Ivory Coast and Guinea, but also from Afghanistan, The Gambia and other countries
- 3.** Most learn to read and write in French when they arrive in France, some don't speak French and some speak English
- 4.** They have to go to trade school if they wish to stay in France¹
- 5.** The majority experience museums, *haute cuisine* and other forms of art for the first time via Soul Food

2024 Highlights

- 1.** Trip to Venice: many artistic discoveries and cultural exchanges, as well as our first time traveling internationally with young Soul Food members
- 2.** Goethe-Institut Library collaboration: months of artistic workshops, a one-day festival, an exhibition, and a live immersive performance that included young Soul Food members dancing on stage for the first time in their lives
- 3.** Upcycled with Soul exhibition of photos and imaginative upcycled sculptures created with young Soul Food members, as part of our collaboration with Atelier KYS, which included an upcycled collection of merch and other garments
- 4.** Soul Food Festival: 6th birthday celebration that included music, culinary collaborations, art workshops, and more

Child and Youth Protection Policy²

Our Child and Youth Protection Policy is grounded in the core principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensuring that we uphold the rights and safety of young Soul Food members. We continue to review this policy and ways that we can further adapt to maintain a secure environment and prioritize their well-being.

¹ We mostly work with young people who arrive in France as unaccompanied minors. Once here, their goal is to benefit from their rights as minors in France. Part of this process is getting an education, but they must choose a trade, go to trade school, get an internship, then an apprenticeship, and eventually permanent work contracts. If they would like to earn higher qualifications, such as university degrees, they have to figure out a way to do this on their own. In this way, the current system makes it virtually impossible for these young people to achieve more.

² The Soul Food Child and Youth Protection Policy can be found on our website.

Principles and Values

1



Protect and maintain the safety of our young members and all children we interact with

2



Promote kindness, tolerance, understanding, and intercultural dialogue

3



Stimulate creativity in ourselves and others

4



Ensure that Soul Food is always a safe space

5



Help others whenever possible

6



Encourage sustainability, mindfulness and eco-responsibility

7



Cultivate youth agency and participation

8



Provide equitable, dignified opportunities to our young members



Cultural Excursions & Events



Breakdown of Excursions & Activities

In 2024 we organized many inspiring cultural excursions in several different cities in France and Italy! Our programming included **46** cultural excursions and activities. Since our first cultural excursion in February 2018, we've gone on **261** in total!

Each year, we emphasize different aspects of our programming to enrich the experiences of young Soul Food members. In 2024, photography continued to be an important part of our programming. On various occasions, young Soul Food members were provided with disposable cameras, enabling them to capture images during some of our activities and in their personal time. We also traveled more and increased the amount of art workshops we organized and participated in.

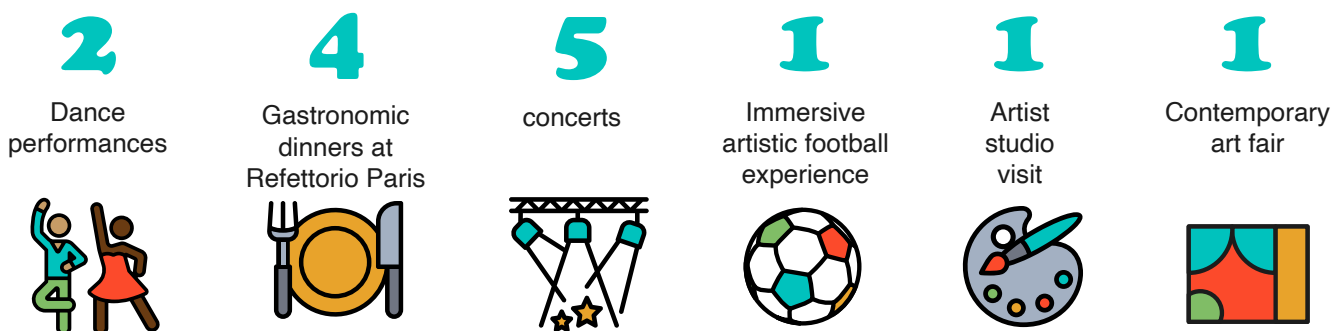
Often, our initiatives overlap. For instance, sometimes when we go to exhibitions, the visit is followed by a workshop inspired by the art we've just seen. When analyzing our programs, we count all cultural excursions once, even when we do multiple activities.³ Our total number of cultural excursions reflects this. However, in the breakdown of participatory and observatory activities, we sometimes count them multiple times to demonstrate the different types of creative experiences we've facilitated.

Cultural Excursions



Observational Activities

This year, we went to:



³ The exception to this is when excursions last multiple days, in which case we count each day separately, as typically there are different young members and volunteers present, as well as different activities. We counted our two one-day trips as one cultural excursion, but we broke up the different activities of our Venice trip because it lasted several days and we did several longer activities each day.

“Thank you very much for the outing; honestly it did me good.”

- Mamadou, young soul food member

Participatory Activities

In addition to observing art, we continued to create this year. Our participatory cultural excursions and activities included:

1 music studio session

1 scavenger hunt of African Venice

13 creative and artistic workshops⁴

8 events organized by and/or in partnership with Soul Food

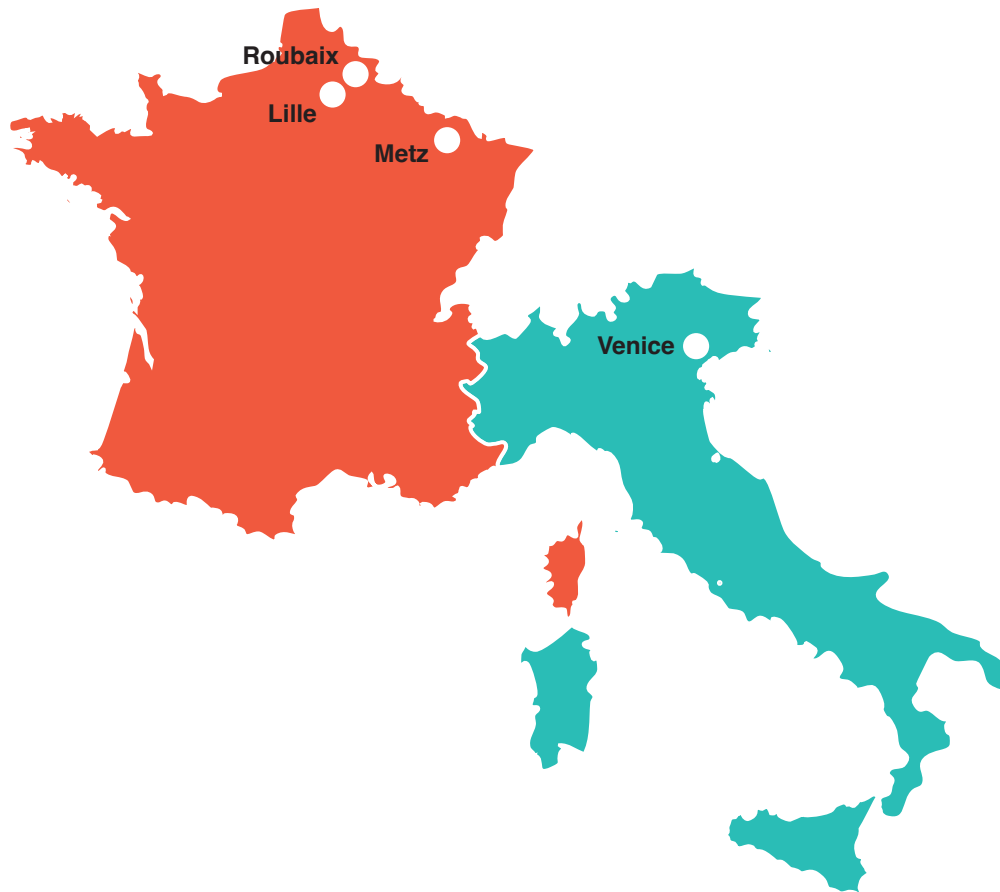
⁴ In 2024, our diverse workshop offering encompassed dance, photography, drawing, screen printing, and collage. At times, we design and organize these ourselves. Sometimes we lead them, and on other occasions, we are invited to participate in workshops hosted by partner organizations.



Activity Highlights

soul food not in Paris

We expanded our travel opportunities for young Soul Food members in 2024, venturing to new and farther destinations! We took 2 different day trips to French cities: Metz in May, Lille and Roubaix in December. In August we traveled to Venice, Italy for a few days.



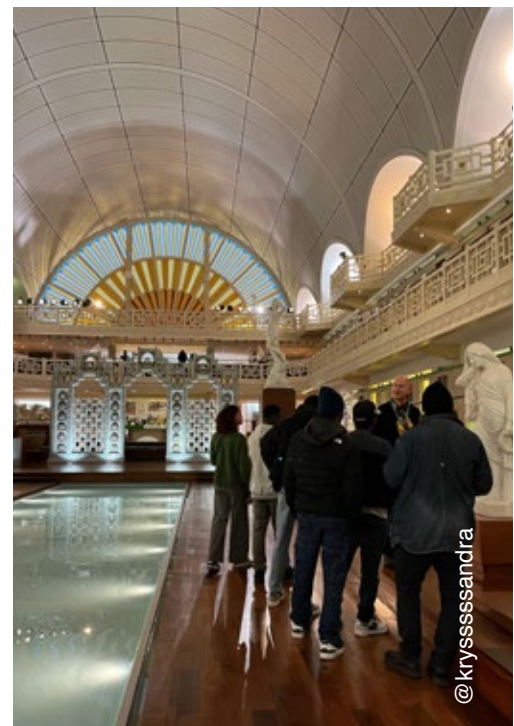
In **Metz** we joined the Swiss Cultural Center, one of our early partners, for a day full of cultural activities, including an outdoor festival, museum visits and a concert. We also had time to walk around the historic quarter of this northeastern French city.



“The city [Metz] was nice and then the people, you felt that they were kind.”

- Mamadou, young soul food member

In **Lille** we wandered around the old city center and saw historical monuments. In the late afternoon we continued on to **Roubaix**, where we had a guided tour of the beautiful art deco museum, La Piscine. We also participated in an artistic workshop there. Then we walked around Roubaix, following a route that included mapping animation lights projected onto historic buildings.



“It was cool [the trip to Lille and Roubaix]! I liked it! We met good people, especially the person who gave us the guided tour, he was a beautiful soul.”

- Mamoudou, young soul food member

In **Venice** we were able to create new partnerships and participate in the Venice Biennale, which is one of the largest and most important contemporary art exhibitions in the world. The trip included several cultural excursions, such as guided tours of museums, an artist's workshop and different parts of the Biennale. We also participated in artistic workshops, learned about the history of Venice, hosted a Soul Food event, went on walks around the islands, and enjoyed various culinary experiences. Meeting young people who have similar backgrounds to young Soul Food members and including them in our programming, was another important element of this trip.

Traveling to Venice was a very special endeavor for us, not only thanks to all of the wonderful people we met and beautiful places we visited, but also for reasons that we couldn't have anticipated. Many of the young people we work with arrive in Italy via the Mediterranean Sea, before traveling through the country on their way to France. As we know, the journeys they embark on are incredibly difficult. These struggles continue in France, but as they spend more time here, they have the opportunity to also have positive experiences, meet good people and we hope, eventually make better lives for themselves. Since they don't typically travel back to countries that they've passed through, the negative experiences they have there remain their primary associations with those countries and their people. Taking them back to a country like Italy, and helping them create new memories there, especially with locals, can therefore help them reconcile those experiences.



“[When] I arrived in Italy in the campos [temporary migrant/refugee camps], I saw Italians spitting on us. After this stay, [soul food trip to Venice] I am less angry with them [Italians]. I saw very beautiful things and met great people.”

- Ousmane, young soul food member





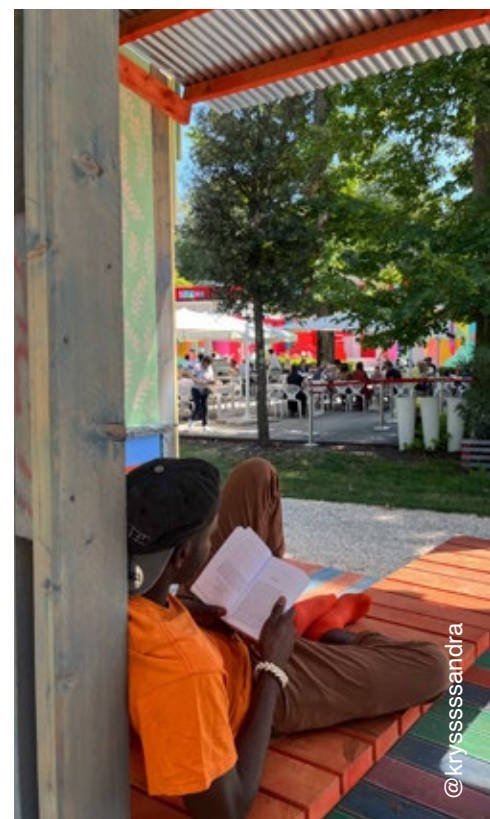
At the start of each of these trips, we provided young Soul Food members with disposable cameras, encouraging them to document the places we visited from their unique perspectives, and anything else they felt inspired by. We plan to showcase their photos as part of an exhibition in 2025.



@kryssandra



@fanchlouarn



@kryssandra

Exhibitions

This year, we organized two art exhibitions and participated in a third. Creating and participating in exhibitions has served as a beautiful method to showcase the creative talents of young Soul Food members, add to our programming, connect with artists, and reach new audiences. This last point is especially true when the exhibitions stay up for a prolonged period of time, providing a platform for others to discover and engage with our work. They also help us spark meaningful conversations and build lasting connections with organizations and individuals who resonate with our goals. We're proud that we've been able to showcase young Soul Food members' work alongside that of so many talented, professional artists.

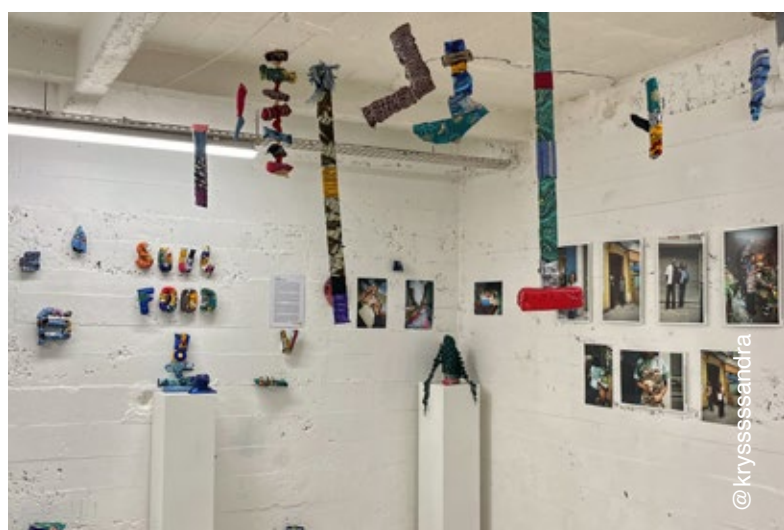
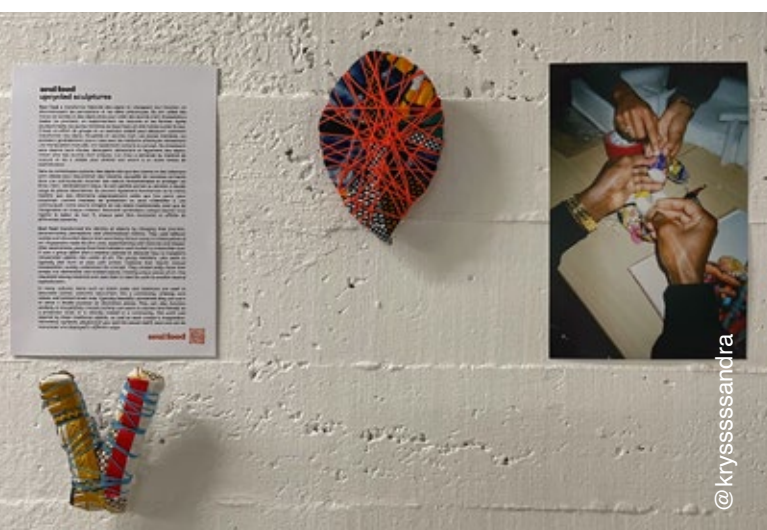


An Ode to Blackness... Everywhere

Contributing artists: Akil Carter, Nana Sani, Donatella Jackson, Rebecca Rowe, Nicolas Farade, Marlene Ahodetor, and young Soul Food members & Madiakham

Curation: Aalyiah Heath

Location: The American University of Paris



Upcycled with Soul

Contributing artists: Young Soul Food members, Anouchka Ophélie Agbayissah, Kryssandra Heslop, Marlene Ahodetor, and Seyane Poan

Curation: Kryssandra Heslop

Location: La Corvée



@florenciaoowen



@florenciaoowen

Common Ground

Contributing artists: Wendelin Spiess and young Soul Food members

Curation: Kryssandra Heslop

Location: Goethe-Institut Paris Library

Goethe-Institut Paris Library Collaboration

This project lasted for several months and was funded by the European Cultural Foundation, as part of their annual program, The Europe Challenge. It included a series of artistic workshops: drawing, screen printing, photography, and dance. These were followed by a closing event, which was a festival combining elements from the workshop series, including an immersive performance.



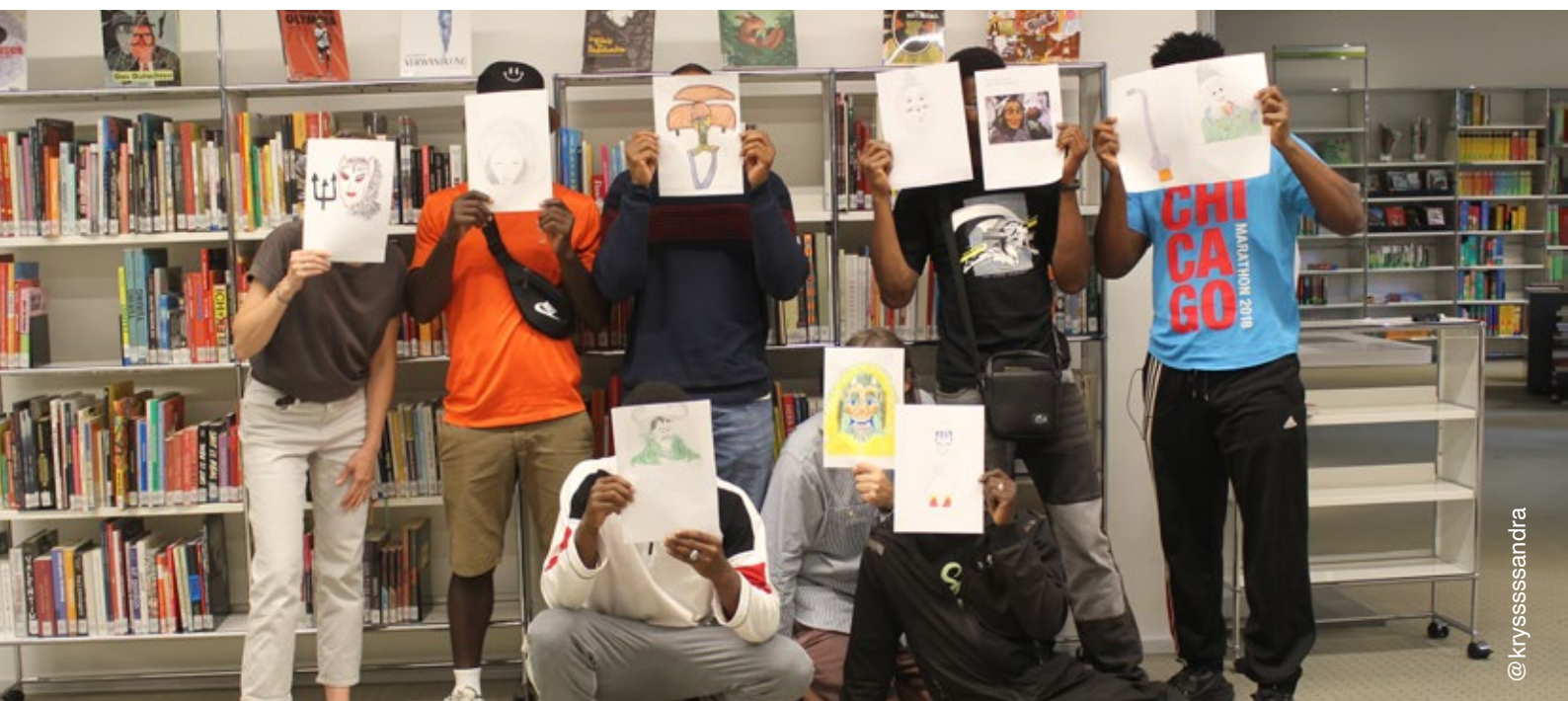
@benoit.dhennin

“Our cooperation with soul food has been an unforgettable experience, rich in human and artistic encounters. The volunteers, young soul food members and artists associated with the project, have contributed to making our library a more diverse, vibrant place, fostering positive exchanges! We are happy to continue this collaboration this year [2025] by making our space available for soul food’s gatherings and possibly [exploring] new joint projects on the horizon.”

- Sarah Foezon, Head of the Goethe-Institut Paris Library



@kryssssandra



@kryssssandra



soul food festival(s)

This year we continued our tradition of celebrating Soul Food's birthday with a one-day cultural festival. We organized a second one as the closing event of our project with the Goethe-Institut Library.

Soul Food's 6th birthday was celebrated at La Pointe du Grouin, a bakery and an early professional development program partner. We worked with two chefs and young Soul Food members, to create a menu inspired by their different cultural backgrounds, also incorporating fresh bread made by young Soul Food members at the event venue. The festival program included live music, DJ sets and an art workshop.

At the Goethe-Institut, our festival encompassed three of their floors and included a screen-printing workshop, our exhibition, *Common Ground*, DJ sets, a menu created in collaboration with young Soul Food members, and a live show, created by one of our volunteers and produced by Soul Food. The show included projections of work by artists we've collaborated with over the years, live music and a dance performance by a professional choreographer, one of our volunteers and young Soul Food members. For the youth, it was the first time they had performed on stage. There were close to 200 people in the audience. It was a wonderful moment and a highlight for many of us.



“The goal of this show was to create a multi-sensory experience for the viewer, combining visual and auditory [elements], in order to intensify the impact and perception of the [art] works. It was about creating harmony between them (photos and paintings) and the music.

The show also included new technologies, such as AI, to create mini-cinematographic scenes between the different universes. One of the biggest challenges was rotoscoping, [a method] inspired by Apple ads from the 2000s. This technique allowed us to anonymize a young soul food member who danced in front of the camera, while integrating him into the show.

The central idea of the show was based on the theme of travel, with the soul food [space]ship allowing us to explore different universes and cultures through the artists' works and the dance performance. As soul food usually does, we highlighted cultural diversity.

It was a great experience and a real pleasure to collaborate with so many people on this project.

It also made me happy to see the young people participating by going on stage without too much stress. Throughout this adventure, art has been a unifying factor despite everyone's differences.

A big thank you to all the people who collaborated on this project!”

- Milton, soul food volunteer

soul food service

This year, our events reached new heights. We joined major cultural platforms in exciting new ways, such as leading a sustainable art workshop as part of the official programming at We Love Green Festival. We organized our first international event in Venice—a talk and artistic workshop held as part of an official Biennale Collateral Event: artist Dread Scott's All African People's Project (AAPC). The collaborative collage celebrating Black culture that we created during the workshop remained on the walls until the AAPC's official closure. We also organized several Soul Food takeovers and festivals, nourishing existing partnerships, creating new ones, fundraising for our initiatives, and engaging with broader audiences, all while championing young Soul Food members' creativity and perspectives.





In 2024 we organized and participated in **13** events total. Young Soul Food members attended **8** of these as cultural excursions (marked with *):

- 1** *An Ode to Blackness... Everywhere* opening
- 2** Soul Food Festival – 6th birthday *
- 3** La Montgolfière Creators' Market
- 4** Atelier KYS x Soul Food Takeover *
- 5** We Love Green Festival – Day 1 *
- 6** We Love Green Festival – Day 2
- 7** We Love Green Festival – Day 3 *
- 8** La Montgolfière Creators' Market
- 9** Soul Food Takeover of the Royal Madeleine Hotel restaurant, Arboré *
- 10** Soul Food Takeover of the AAPC in Venice *
- 11** Les Traversées du Marais Festival *
- 12** Arts sans frontières – 11th arrondissement Mairie (town hall) panel and event
- 13** Soul Food Takeover of the Goethe-Institut *



soul food takeovers

Throughout the year, we organized several creative community events around Paris and in Venice, Italy. These events embody Soul Food through the different forms of art present, featuring menus co-created by young Soul Food members and guest chefs, creative workshops, art exhibitions, immersive performances, and music. Our young members attend these events to experience the cultural offerings alongside other participants, fostering meaningful exchanges.



Visual art: @jakman_



Visual art: @celcastella

Additional Events

Several partners invited us to collaborate on events in 2024, providing valuable opportunities to forge new partnerships, enhance our visibility and expand our community. These collaborations often enriched our overall programming, as we could invite young Soul Food members to participate.

Certain events primarily serve as fundraising and networking platforms, such as when we are invited to join panel discussions or sell our merch and art at creative markets. These occasions also contribute to community growth and increased awareness of our initiatives.

Professional Development Program



Program Breakdown

Through our professional development program, we are able to help young Soul Food members launch fulfilling careers, maintain legal immigration status and integrate in positive ways. Once initial interest and motivation is identified, young members attend an orientation meeting and sign a contract between the organization and themselves, which serves as a way of holding each young member accountable. They also benefit from hours of administrative assistance and mediation by Soul Food, between their employers, education professionals, French Child Services, and the prefectures of the territories concerned, with the goal of ensuring their successful transition into their careers and to protect their legal status in France.

This program is difficult to quantify, as finding and securing each professional opportunity and then working on every young member's administrative situation, requires countless hours of work. Even so, on every occasion that a young Soul Food member signs a professional contract or receives positive news about their immigration status, it represents a significant achievement—not just for them but for Soul Food as a whole. Each individual success is a testament to the collective impact of our work.

As art and culture are at the heart of Soul Food's mission, we focus exclusively on providing professional opportunities within creative industries. Through our partners, we offer access to volunteer positions, internships, apprenticeships, and permanent employment in the following fields:

Culinary Arts



Chef



Baker



Pastry Chef



Carpenter/
Designer



Fashion
Professional
(various positions)



Florist

Partners

We are committed to working with like-minded partners who are understanding of the administrative obstacles that young Soul Food members face, while also being passionate about what they do and prominent professionals in their domains. Ensuring safe, dignified and non-violent work environments is also one of our priorities, particularly in sectors where these types of issues are prevalent, such as in the restaurant industry. These elements are important to us because we are committed to providing opportunities that are not typically available to the young people we work with. Considering the personal and administrative/legal obstacles that they have to overcome, it's also essential that they receive the maximum support possible, thereby giving them room to learn and grow in their chosen field.

Thanks to these partnerships, the following businesses and cultural establishments are places where young Soul Food members in our professional development program gained occupational experience in 2024:⁵

- Ten Belles
- Refettorio Paris
- Arboré (Royal Madeleine Hotel restaurant)
- La Pointe du Grouin
- Noso
- Tempero

⁵ We've maintained partnerships with previous professional development program partners, even if no young Soul Food members were placed in their establishments in 2024.

“We continue to appreciate the quality of our exchanges with soul food. At Ten Belles, we know that the food industry offers concrete opportunities to build a future. By collaborating with soul food, we can help unaccompanied minors and young adults [migrants and refugees] find their place in this sector and develop solid skills to move forward with confidence.”

– Alice Quillet, co-founder of Ten Belles & soul food partner

Events

Through the events we organize and participate in, young Soul Food members in the culinary arts track of our professional development program have had the opportunity to stretch their creative culinary muscles and work with different professionals in their field by teaming up to create our menus and by baking fresh bread. Through this initiative, they are also able to network with chefs and other professionals from the food industry, and practice the skills they’ve learned while volunteering with our team in a positive setting.

Thanks to these event partnerships and collaborations, young Soul Food members had the opportunity to work with the following professionals and creative establishments:

- Simon Auscher
- Linda Khazri (La Chope des Artistes)
- La Pointe du Grouin
- Ashwin Marius Le Prince (Arboré)
- Foulématou Bangoura
- Phoebe Dunn (L’embuscade)
- Janaé Lynch
- Hanoï Corner

Each time we contribute to the food offering for an event, we use a list of West African recipes and ingredients that was created with young Soul Food members, partners, chefs, and volunteers. This list contains food that our young members are accustomed to cooking and eating. It’s an integral component of every Soul Food culinary collaboration. Additionally, this practice has given young members the opportunity to switch roles when they teach chefs how to make traditional recipes from their cultures.



Examples of these culinary collaborations include the Soul Food takeover of Arboré, the Royal Madeleine Hotel restaurant, where a young Soul Food member, who is also an apprentice there, worked with Chef Ashwin Marius Le Prince. They created a menu inspired by the vibrant flavors of Tamil Nadu, India, enhanced with West African ingredients and French influences, for a truly unique culinary experience.

At our 6th birthday celebration, two young Soul Food members apprenticing at La Pointe du Grouin alongside a former young Soul Food member who began there as an intern via our professional development program and now holds a permanent contract, baked fresh bread for the occasion. Young members also worked with Chefs Foulématou Bangoura and Linda Khazri to create a menu inspired by the rich flavors of West and North Africa.

During Les Traversées du Marais Festival, young members joined Chef Linh Nguyen from Hanoi Corner. They served a menu blending Vietnamese classics with creative West African twists, celebrating the intersection of these rich culinary traditions.

After the Program

Our goals with this program are to help young Soul Food members discover a career path they can be passionate about and to open doors to prestigious, meaningful and equitable professional opportunities. We also strive to guide them through their career initiation with reliable and talented professionals and to use these opportunities to help them achieve stable administrative situations in France. Our hope is that as we achieve these goals, they will reach a level of autonomy and positive integration that will then empower them to go off and secure vocations that they aspire to attain on their own.

Some young Soul Food members sign permanent work contracts and continue their professional journeys with our program partners. Others seek employment elsewhere at the conclusion of their apprenticeship contracts.



Communication & Our Team



Digital Communication

Social Media

Social media remains an essential tool for Soul Food, helping us amplify our mission in numerous ways. We use it to raise awareness about important causes, advocate for our initiatives, increase visibility, build partnerships, share authentic stories, and promote our events.

While we maintain a presence on multiple platforms, Instagram continues to be our most active and impactful channel. It's where we connect most deeply with our audience, as well as where we have the largest following and highest rates of engagement.

4,354 Instagram followers

Most views on a single post⁶ = **24,313**

We also share content on Facebook, LinkedIn, Spotify, and YouTube.

Newsletter: The soul food Collective

This year, our newsletter continued to play a key role in strengthening our connection with our supporters. We use it to share details about our upcoming events and other Soul Food news. Issues also include creative resources, special updates from our community, ways to support our initiatives, and our activity highlights.

⁶ This was for a cross post between Soul Food and the Goethe-Institut Paris.



Team

Soul Food is powered by a dedicated team of volunteers who bring creativity, talent and diverse perspectives to the organization. This international team continues to play a vital role in driving our mission forward, with contributions ranging from specialized tasks to regular, hands-on involvement.

Leadership

Soul Food remains led by its co-founders, François Le Louarn (secretary general and legal expert) and Kryssandra Heslop (president and creative director). Together, they collaborate on all aspects of the organization while leveraging their individual expertise to manage key projects and strategic initiatives. Their commitment has been instrumental in shaping the organization's growth and impact.

Volunteers

Our team of volunteers expanded again this year, with members contributing in dynamic and impactful ways. Those based outside France have been helpful in supporting remote projects such as website updates and social media campaigns. In Paris, volunteers stepped in for both occasional, skills-based contributions—such as graphic design and translation—and broader, ongoing roles that support multiple programs and projects, including our cultural excursions.

“I was just happy to do it with them [young soul food members], to spend time with them.”

- Janick, soul food volunteer, speaking about the dance project at the Goethe-Institut Paris

“The trip to Venice was truly memorable, right in the heart of the Biennale. There was something magical about it, and I loved sharing this adventure with young soul food members. We learned a lot about the history of art, how Venice was built, and exchanged ideas with artists, curators, teachers, and passionate, committed activists. A real food excursion too, to discover the local specialties! It was a real pleasure to see the young soul food members reacting to and appreciating the various works of art, and letting their creativity and vision shine through.”

- Manuella, soul food volunteer



Financial Resources



Financial Reporting

We adhere to the emergent understanding that dividing expenses into program and overhead costs is not an accurate way to portray a nonprofit's activities and expenditures, especially a small one that functions with limited resources. Overhead spending isn't inherently bad, but the myth that it is has real consequences for nonprofit organizations. Expenses that have been traditionally categorized as overhead costs are actually mission-critical expenditures. They are necessary to generate future income, continue existing programs, pay qualified staff, and guarantee the longevity and sustainability of the organization, making them critical investments.

A more representative financial portrayal demonstrates how costs are shared between programs and activities. For instance, when we invest in fundraising or administrative materials and equipment, these are expenses that support our mission and are therefore classified as core mission support. As we do not currently have a designated Soul Food location, most of our meetings and work sessions take place in public settings (coworking spaces, cafes and restaurants), adding expenses to this category and those of the programs and projects we are working on. When we purchase materials such as art supplies, we typically use them for multiple projects and initiatives, making them direct shared program costs. Other expenses and funds can be specific to particular programs, activities or events, such as disposable cameras for photography projects or train tickets for a trip with young Soul Food members, and that is why they are classified under direct expenses – program specific.

Prioritizing impact instead of overhead is also a more accurate interpretation of success, and doing so helps us make an impact that aligns with our potential. Expenses traditionally classified as overhead and administrative costs are required components of nonprofit work. Our mission cannot be carried out without these. A strong, sustainable infrastructure cannot be built without investing in the organization. Our financial reporting reflects this.

Sources of Funding and Donations

We employ creative fundraising strategies, such as organizing cultural community events and selling Soul Food merch, to bolster the organization's long-term sustainability. Monetary donations remain a cornerstone of our financial foundation. Additionally, in-kind and skills-based donations significantly enhance our programs and initiatives.

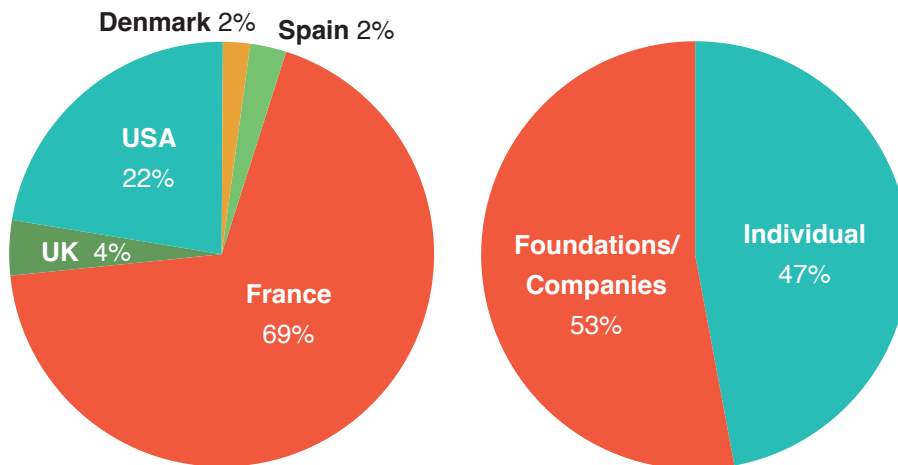
Direct Financial Donations

Direct monetary contributions continue to be fundamental to Soul Food's success. These unrestricted funds provide us with the flexibility to pursue our mission and adapt to evolving circumstances as needed.

For the past few years, a primary fundraising objective has been to secure more recurring donations. We are grateful to the generous donors who contribute monthly, enhancing our ability to establish a consistent revenue stream and increasing the likelihood of securing additional financial support over time.



Sources of Direct Financial Donations⁷



Regardless of the amount, monthly recurring donations are vital to Soul Food's sustainability, offering a level of reliability that one-time contributions cannot. They enable us to plan future activities and move closer to compensating staff by ensuring a steady influx of funds each month.

In-Kind Donations

Soul Food has been able to come this far, largely due to in-kind contributions from partners and supporters over the years. These include, but are not limited to: complimentary museum passes, concert tickets, snacks, art workshops, food and wine for events, exhibition materials, and book donations. We've also received clothing donations, which have been distributed to our young members, particularly those newly arrived and lacking basic necessities such as a safe shelter, food and warm clothing. Some partners also offer discounts on items such as tickets to shows and food from their establishments.

Skills-Based Donations

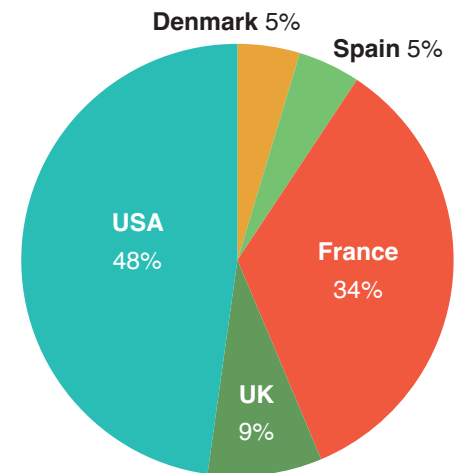
Certain donations come in the form of expertise. For instance, creative professionals have donated their time and skills in areas such as photography and videography, ensuring that Soul Food events are well-documented. Several chefs volunteered with us in 2024, providing immense support in terms of fundraising, as well as offering networking and professional experiences for young Soul Food members.

Such contributions are invaluable, as we currently lack the budget to pay full price for these services.⁸ Their efforts also lend credibility to our work by providing essential tools, such as high-quality digital content to present to partners and potential donors, and professional entertainment at Soul Food events.

Creative Community Events

Organizing and participating in events serve multiple purposes for us, including fundraising. One of the primary ways we generate funds through events is by offering food. Since we do not have our own physical space, events also provide the opportunity to sell most of our merch and art. Some events offer additional fundraising avenues, such as direct donations, bake sales, silent auctions, and raffles.

Individual Donations



One-Time vs Monthly Recurring Donations



⁷ The chart on the left includes individual and foundation/company donations by country. It doesn't include grants.

⁸ We compensate musicians a symbolic sum for performing at our events, in an effort to support artists who support Soul Food. We also provided remuneration to some of the artists and creatives who collaborated with us as part of our project with the Goethe-Institut Paris Library, as it was a funded initiative.

The number of events we organized and participated in by year:

2024=13

2023=11

2022=13

2021=2

2020=1

Merch and Art

Merch and art are integral components of our fundraising strategy⁹. The primary goal of this initiative is to create alternative, non-compromising revenue streams to fund our activities. This is in line with our strategic goal of achieving financial sustainability.

The art pieces we sell are created in collaboration with artists who are part of the Soul Food community. Kryssandra designs Soul Food merch. In addition to having merch and art stands at most of our events, we are sometimes invited to markets, where selling these items is a primary objective. Some of our merch is also sold at Yallâ boutiques.

In 2024, we undertook two significant merch projects. The first was a partnership with Atelier KYS to create an upcycled clothing collection, using items including Soul Food t-shirts that were defective and never sold.¹⁰ The second was part of our Goethe-Institut Paris Library project, where we organized drawing and screen-printing workshops with young Soul Food members and created a design based on their drawings that they helped print on t-shirts.¹¹

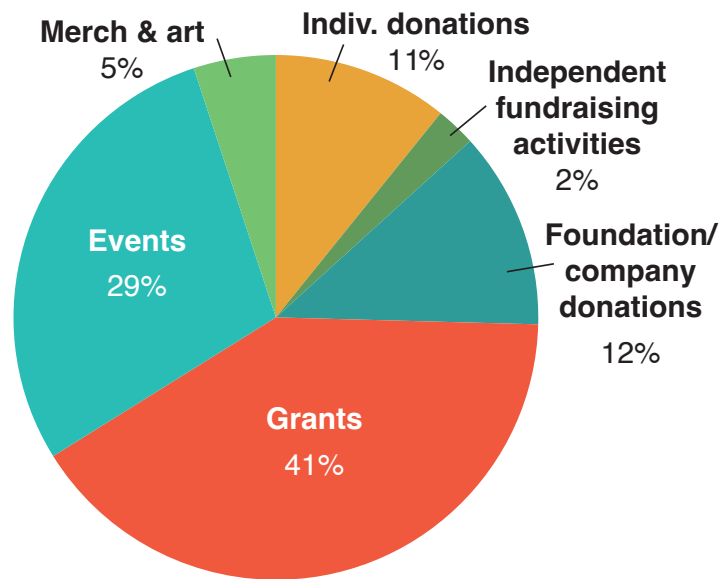
⁹ Each year we sell merch and art created in the current year, as well as in previous years.

¹⁰ Since our first merch release in 2021, we've preserved defective items, or those used for printing tests, with the hope of transforming them into upcycled pieces.

¹¹ Young Soul Food members involved in this project were given t-shirts.

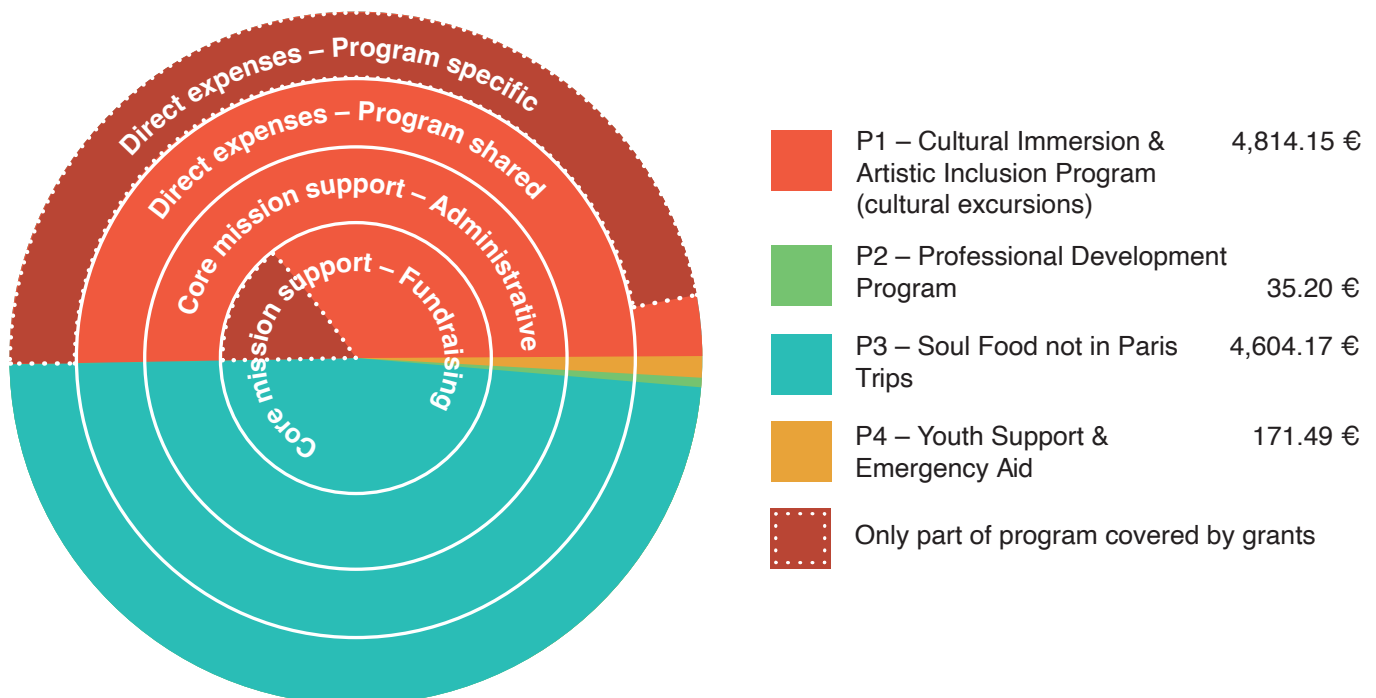


Sources of Income^{12,13}



Breakdown of Expenses

In 2024, we continued to invest in the organization's core to support Soul Food's mission. This is reflected in our breakdown of expenses, as are the four principal youth-centered initiatives that we allocated financial resources to throughout the year.



¹² The “Merch & art” total includes all merch and art sales, including those sold at events. The “Events” total is therefore missing these sales.

¹³ The collaboration with the Goethe-Institut Paris Library was funded by a European Cultural Foundation grant. The library applied for it and later invited us to be project partners. The grant covered the project, including the workshop series, remuneration of some of the professionals involved and production of the closing event and our exhibition, *Common Ground*. Part of it funded the coordination of the project.



@kryssssandra



@thatguyyoujustmet



@kryssssandra



@kryssssandra



@kryssssandra



@kryssssandra



@fanchilouarn



@kryssssandra



@thatguyyoujustmet

Looking Toward the Future



Our Mission Continues: Future Ideas & Projects

Since we created Soul Food in 2018, we have been dedicated to creating meaningful impact in the lives of young migrants and refugees. In 2024, this commitment remained as strong as ever, and we are determined to keep building on our work.

soul food not in Paris

In 2023 we shared our goals to expand our initiatives to other locations. In 2024 we accomplished this by traveling with young Soul Food members around France and to Italy, where we connected with locals who believe in our mission and were enthusiastic about collaborating with us. In the short and long-term future, we plan to continue making these impactful connections in different cities and countries around the world.

One of the key reasons we are looking to expand internationally is our ongoing pursuit of financial stability and independence. From the very beginning, our community has extended beyond borders, with supporters—including donors—based in different countries. It is thanks to this global network that we have been able to grow and sustain our work, and we hope to deepen these connections in the years ahead.



Looking Ahead: Our Priorities for the Near Future

When contemplating Soul Food's future, our focus remains on three key strategic objectives:

1. Achieving financial security without compromising our values
2. Increasing Soul Food's visibility and expanding our community
3. Reaching more young migrants and refugees both locally and internationally

As a volunteer-driven nonprofit, we recognize that while passion fuels our work, sustainability requires more than dedication alone. Operating entirely on volunteer efforts is not a viable long-term solution, which is why securing reliable, values-aligned funding is a top priority for us. We remain hopeful and committed to finding solutions, whether through increased financial support or a shift in how we operate. While we would love to continue at full capacity, we also recognize the need to adapt if necessary.

This past year, we have continued receiving recurring monthly donations, and we will continue working to strengthen this essential pillar of support. Recurring contributions, no matter the size, provide a steady foundation that helps us sustain and expand our programs. Throughout 2024, members from our community also organized a few Soul Food fundraisers of their own accord. These not only raised essential funds, but also lightened our load, by allowing us to focus fully on our mission. We hope to continue to inspire similar actions in the future.

A Vision for the Future

Beyond direct programming, our long-term goal is to contribute to larger conversations about migration and integration. We hope that our initiatives will one day serve as a resource for research and policy discussions, shedding light on how reception conditions, access to equitable opportunities, creative activities, and community support, impact the mental health, integration and overall lives of young migrants and refugees. Through this work, we aspire to drive positive change in migration and integration approaches worldwide.

We also aim to have paid staff to run the organization in the future, as well as a dedicated physical space for Soul Food. This would serve as a home for our team and a creative hub for young migrants and refugees. We envision a place where local residents and immigrants can connect, where artistic expression thrives and where Soul Food can generate sustainable income to support its programs well into the future.

A Heartfelt Thank You

We've come this far because of our incredible community. Your support, whether through donations, participation, collaboration, or simply spreading the word, has been invaluable. Thank you for believing in Soul Food and for being part of our journey. Together we are creating equitable opportunities, encouraging positive cultural exchange, fostering creativity, and building a more inclusive world.





**Everyone who contributed to this annual report
did so on a strictly volunteer basis.**

Cover Photo

© Kryssandra Heslop

Photography

© Marlene Ahodetor (@marlatesyeux), Bilen Barzaghi
(@bilenbarzaghi), Jim Browksi (@thatguyyoujustmet),
Benoît Dhennin (@benoit.dhennin), Kryssandra Heslop (@
kryssssandra), Bernelee Kritzinger (@bernelee_k), François
Le Louarn (@fanchlouarn), Florencia Owen
(@florenciaowen), Amanda Rougier
(@amandarougier_photos)

Graphic Design

Tim Francis

Content

Kryssandra Heslop

Translation

Pénélope Bacle

Proofreading & Editing

Matthew Delabre
François Le Louarn

François Le Louarn,
Secretary General, Co-Founder
Kryssandra Heslop,
Creative Director, President, Co-Founder

**© 2025, soul food.
All rights reserved.**





@soulfoodparis

